The Rev. W. W. Manross
with the Preacher's regards

St. James's Church
Philadelphia

THE SERMONS OF

The Rev. James Alan Montgomery, Ph. D., S. T. D.

and

The Rt. Rev. Francis Marion Taitt, S. T. D.

Preached at the One Hundred and Twenty-fifth
Anniversary of the Parish

1934

The One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the founding of St. James's Church was observed on the morning of Sunday, April 29, 1934. At this service the preacher was the Rev. James Alan Montgomery, Ph.D., S. T. D., Professor of Old Testament Literature at the Divinity School in Philadelphia, and Professor of Semitic Languages at the University of Pennsylvania.

On the morning of Tuesday, May 1, 1934, the Celebration of the Holy Communion which marked the One Hundred and Fiftieth Convention of the Diocese of Pennsylvania was held at St. James's Church. Upon this occasion the preacher was the Rt. Rev. Francis Marion Taitt, S. T. D., Bishop of Pennsylvania.

THE SERMON OF DR. MONTGOMERY

The Perfecting of the Saints

Hebrews xi:39-40: *These all having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise, God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.*
That they without us should not be perfected.

These words are the climax of the 11th chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, one of the great outbursts of pure oratory in the Bible. The chapter gives a review of the saints of the Old Covenant, named one after the other, as examples of the courageous faith by which men are saved. But those saints, the writer insists, lacked something which the Church of Christ has been vouchsafed—the fulfillment of the promise in Christ, without which, and so apart from us, they will not be made perfect.

This great chapter is based upon the theme, the doctrine, of the unity of the saints of God, of the spiritual family tie which binds all together, Church Triumphant and Church Militant. And I do not think that I am stretching the point too far when I apply it to the saints, not of long ago, but of near yesterdays, of the eight generations of which this Parish is an inheritor. My theme today is this; that those, our saints, "apart from us shall not be made perfect."

At a happy anniversary like this, of your one hundred and twenty-five years of existence as a distinct parish, various moods may be excited. We may fleetingly become historical-minded and wonder what kind of people our ancestors were, and if saints, what kind of saints. I confess we should find them men and women like ourselves, with our human complex, none perfect saints, but saints to be made perfect, as the Epistle says.

Or the preacher might draw his moralizing lesson: What fine people those saints of the past were, and so it should be our ambition to imitate, to live up to them. I am sure that this argument does not go very far, especially for the younger folk of today. We are questioning the wisdom and the virtue of the past, and there are those who would wipe the slate of history clean.

But I stick to my text. We the heirs of those of the past have not merely the duty of appreciating and admiring them, setting them up on pedestals in a Hall of Fame. But the very practical obligation lying upon us is this, in the words of the text: to round out, to complete, to perfect, what they were and what they did. For they are not perfect without us. Wherever those saints are, they are not occupied with looking back into the world that is past, which is ancient history, but into the coming ages, looking down upon us, wondering if we shall fulfil and perfect what they have begun. The father, the mother, that have gone, look forward ever to the lives of their children as they are to be. And so the saints in Paradise of the Body of Christ, which is the Church, look forward to the generations of saints who are to come, with whom they are mystically bound, and without whom they will not be made perfect. For the Eternal is not static, it is ever concerned with the future.

If then we are serious with the thought of this solemn day, proud of the history of the past and of the men and women who made it, ours is the duty to fill out and perfect the life and work that they have only begun and never themselves finished. This is my moral for you today, and this the sum of my sermon. You have a goodly heritage. What increment will you make of it?

I shall now do something I have never before committed in a sermon—speak personally of myself. Your

Rector of his friendship and courtesy asked me to preach today. I did not accept the request as a matter of grace, but out of duty to his command, for I too am a child of the United Parishes, and so am under orders to their Rectors. I could only suppose that he desired me to be in some way a witness to the life of these ancient Parishes. And so it became my duty to examine whether I might qualify as a witness. May I state to you the result of this examination? Indeed perhaps preaching might be better if congregations sometimes examined the preachers.

I was baptized in old Christ Church, where my Father had almost all his children baptized, although for most of his family life he lived at a distance from the city. For my younger boyhood we lived in New York, where we attended for eight years the Church of the Holy Communion, which through its founder the Reverend Dr. Muhlenberg was an offshoot of these Three United Parishes and in particular of St. James's Church. I shall have more to say about that remarkable man. Later in Philadelphia I was confirmed in Christ Church Chapel, a parochial development of Christ Church, now disappeared. My first year in the active Ministry was spent as a Curate in that same Church of the Holy Communion in New York. And later I had four years as a Curate in St. Peter's Church, one of your Associate Parishes. So much for my qualifications as a witness, accidental or providential, as you will. I assure you that those associations with your family history are among the dearest of my memories and the richest of my spiritual experiences.

Now to bear my testimony, I will reverse the process of history and travel backwards; for I have come to wonder whether that is not the true method of historical study, to proceed from the known to the unknown. I have felt that the most concrete exhibition to my eyes of the community genius of the Three United

Parishes, by which they are filling out, perfecting the work of the generations gone before, is a certain experience I had with the Rectors of those Three Parishes. Just seventeen years ago. America's entrance into the Great War was declared on Good Friday. On Easter Monday Bishop Rhinelander called a meeting of the Clergy to take action in the crisis. This Diocese, I am proud to recall, was the first to "mobilize." The three men who stood out in response to that call were the three Rectors of these Three United Parishes, still bound in spirit by the ancient association. Dr. Jefferys of St. Peter's promptly accepted the chaplaincy of the Pennsylvania Hospital Unit, the first unit of the kind to volunteer, as he was one of the earliest volunteer Chaplains. Your own Rector at once proceeded to an Officers' Training Camp at a distant point to give his services as *padre,* and he returned to his parochial duty only on the presentation of his urgent duty to his Parish. And Dr. Washburn of Christ Church, whose only son was a volunteer in the War, was one of the most active and vigorous of the Clergy in the interests of the men in the training camps. One of these three gentlemen I have known since college days; all three I love in this common bond. It has ever since made my heart beat warm to think of this common inheritance of Christian vigor in those three Rectors, lineal spiritual descendants of the clergy and laity of these Parishes in the days of the Revolution. They were perfecting, filling out the work and life of their spiritual ancestors, "carrying on"—I use the phrase with solemnity, and as a witness I could still feel that pulse beating strong as in ancient days. Some of the Protestant bodies in the country are talking of forbidding their ministers from serving as Chaplains in future wars; a recent synod of almost the largest denomination has just taken such action. It is a denomination which contributed about the smallest percentage of Chaplains in the Great War.

I am glad to think that our Church is made of different Christian stuff.

My memory goes back further, when I was introduced as a Curate in old St. Peter's Parish. The world knows of its highback pews, of its old families which have persisted there with such deep affection; and the world may not know more of it, for in its gentility it does not advertise itself. But I found there a throbbing parish of men and women devoted to the work of the Church, with the great majority of the parishioners people in the humbler walks of life, and with every form of activity for the welfare, spiritual and material, of the churched and the unchurched. For instance, one of the agencies of the parish, St. Peter's House, was, I believe, the earliest case of a Church Settlement House. My years there make one of my profound spiritual experiences, in which I gained far more than I contributed; and this intimacy gave me a profound love for this nucleus of fine old Parishes. St. Peter's was not living on the memory of the past, it was perfecting the saints who had gone before.

Then my memory goes back again to my Curacy in the Church of the Holy Communion in New York City, and further back still to my days as a child and young boy in the same Parish. This relation remains as another great spiritual experience in my life. But I speak of it because that distant Parish belongs to your parochial history by way of lineage. Its founder, William Augustus Muhlenberg, is one of the most remarkable figures in American Church history, I am personally inclined to think the greatest. He was one of your own children, of your clergy. Introduced unto our Communion in Christ Church, he later became a minister of the Parishes, and with particular duty at St. James's Church. Here he organized one of the earliest of Sunday Schools—it was the Episcopal Church in this Diocese which established the first Sunday

Schools in this country; and here he established the first male choir of young men. Here he dreamed dreams which he carried into effect in the Parish which he founded in New York City. There he had his male choir in the chancel, for the first time in American history, there he introduced the weekly Eucharist and the daily Morning and Evening Prayer and the proper celebration of the great Festivals, along with the creation of large parochial works, crowning his life with the foundation of St. Luke's Hospital, the first of the kind in the country. I believe that you of this Parish may especially boast of that young man of yours who became one of the great Saints in the Church of Christ. And I recall to you the names of others who went forth from the fold of these Parishes, men like Bishop Kemper, our first missionary bishop to the West, of Bishop Hobart of New York, who in his High Churchmanship antedated the Oxford Movement, dying before that Movement began, while Muhlenberg himself was a precursor of it in many respects. Old St. Peter's stands out as one of the early innovators in ritual and its only true basis, strong Church doctrine. That is, there was some original fertile impulse in those "old Parishes", as we affectionately call them, and others disdainfully, which produced a fine breed of men and a noble pervasive tradition. For the glory of a father lies not in what he himself is but in the virtue of his children. Nature only goes right when each successive generation perfects, fills out the life and work of its ancestors.

I have given personal testimony to what I have seen and experienced in the perfecting life of the Three United Churches, still united as they are in the fellowship and community of interests of their distinguished Rectors. But lest I be accused of working over ancient history and turning the hands of the clock back, I pass on to make a general observation on the present, one which since it has dawned upon me, fills me with the

deepest respect for the United Parishes. My observation is original, for when I have expressed it to others, they are surprised, but none denies it; and so I think it must be true. And I give it to you, not of flattery, but as true. And I can speak impartially, for canonically I am a "stranger within your gates"; I am not on any roll of the three Parishes.

Now my observation is this: I do not know of any three churches in this city which taken as a group, are performing such vigorous, forward work as your Three Parishes. Comparisons may be odious—for outsiders, and so I will speak positively in terms of facts. Two of the Three Parishes are still where they ever were, within two or three blocks of the ancient river front—whence all other Protestant Churches, with one exception, have fled. There they have accommodated themselves to their new human surroundings, progressing into fresh fields of endeavor as history has changed the map. Old Christ Church is one of the youngest and bravest of our parishes with its high spirit and forward policy, and with the institutions and buildings it has established for its neighborhood. It is a striking combination of the old and the new. As for St. Peter's Church, I have already given personal testimony to its life and vigor. It still maintains its rare spirit of devotion to the region and people where God has put it. Among other things I like to think of its Choir School, unique of its kind in this city, as going back to the tradition of Muhlenberg with his male choir. And it is no accident but a matter of inheritance that St. James's has its splendid music and choir, while Christ Church preserves the same tradition, but with the choir in the ancient organ gallery.

Those two parishes had to meet their new problems far earlier with the trend of their parishioners to west of Broad Street. St. James's is now in the midst of the like problem, with the question whether any of its

hereditary clientèle will be found east and south of the City Lines. I am not sympathizing with you but congratulating you, for the old life here is bursting forth to meet the new conditions and to flower in them. You are not thinking of the old congregation that has gone but of the ever new congregations that are to be. Under your statesmanlike Rector you have established a staff of clergy of differentiated functions—Rector, Preacher, Pastors, Teachers, the actually necessary development in any large city parish. And it has good evangelical background, for it was St. Paul who said: "He gave some to be apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints"—note that last word, *the perfecting of the saints.* You have a cathedral staff without the fuss and feathers of a cathedral. (May I remark that a cathedral must grow, not just be planted anywhere.) I rejoice in one splendid thing you have done under your Rector's leadership: you have made the Church free, truly "a house of prayer for all people", freeing it from one unfortunate shackle of Protestant tradition. And you have taken the lead in this, for yours is the only center-city church that is free. I have reminded your Rector that long ago his predecessor Mr. Muhlenberg dreamed here of a Free Church. Also you have minimized almost to the disappearing point the passing of the collection plate—a daring innovation, but aimed right, for we have too much magnified the mercenary alms and minimized the spiritual oblations at the altar. You have established a School of Religion for lay people, in a highly intelligent way, a so necessary adjunct today in a popular education that is without religion. And you are hospitable in giving home and lodging to all things that are of good report. For it belongs to the great charter of the Church to fill up the things that are lacking in humanity's life. These are but summary details of many outstanding works; I

can conceive the devotion and the intelligence they must represent in the life of your Parish.

You are facing problems, I repeat, problems for which no immediate answer may be given, some of them not merely ecclesiastical but mundane, as for instance the provision of an Endowment Fund. We all know the commonplace: It is a hard time to raise money. But refuse to be commonplace. It is always hard times that produce great men and great institutions; easy times destroy society—a hard doctrine, but true religion is realistic. Our American Church was born with travailing pains in and after the Revolution; it recreated itself in expansion and new ideas in the early decades of the nineteenth century, when any American historian will tell you that social and economic conditions were anything but lovely. Of those men you are the children. You will not fail them.

And you can take comfort from this record of the Three Old Parishes, of which you are one. You might have sat in the old pews, until they were filled with ghosts, and looked back to the ancestors of older days as though you were saved by their merits. But you have not done so. You have moved on, with the old blood in your veins—and your vigor proves that it was good old blood—with the sense that ancestry in the Body of Christ is the call to forward outlook and action; that if you fail, those of the past have failed; with the high manly sense of obligation to them, for they without us shall not be made perfect. Saints profess and theologians discuss the theme of "the mystical union in the Body of Christ." I rarely dare to use such profound language in public, but I have come deeply to feel the truth of what it stands for in your history. And I commit you with my prayers to the pervasive and persuasive influence of that mystical unity. God grant that you be made perfect with the saints and they with you.

THE SERMON OF BISHOP TAITT

The Diocese of Pennsylvania has assembled in this Church for the opening service of its 150th annual Convention; and to show our respect and honor to a Church of noble history on this its 125th anniversary. The historic sermon was preached last Sunday before a large and deeply interested congregation.

I am chosen as the preacher today because of my official position as the Father in God of this Diocese. To me, however, there is a more special appropriateness than this.

St. James's is one of the three Churches that were combined under the rectorship of Bishop White of Christ Church, the mother of us all. In the year 1695, twelve years after the founding of Philadelphia, steps were taken for the erection of a building for the worship of Almighty God according to the form of the Church of England. In one year's time this building was erected and used for worship. On August 1, 1754 petition was made to the proprietaries stating "that members of the Church of England had grown so numerous that the present Church was little more than sufficient to accommodate one-half the families of that persuasion with seats, and that it judged most proper that another Church should be built toward the south end of the City."

On Friday, September 1, 1761 this Church was opened as St. Peter's Church. It was called familiarly, "The Church on the Hill" because it was in a select settlement known as Society Hill and not within the city walks. A special stipulation was that the preacher at St. Peter's should be as good as the one at Christ Church. In 1809 a like condition brought about the establishment of St. James's Church at Seventh Street below Market. It was not an independent Church, but

like St. Peter's was under the charge of Bishop White and one staff of Clergy served all three centers.

It had its share in all great functions and from the first was composed of men of large means and high standing. Its contributions to all objects were frequently the highest in the Diocese. In 1870 the Church removed to its present location as the city had greatly expanded westward.

It so happens that as a child I was trained by and worshipped in Christ Church. I was ordained in St. James's Church June 21, 1883. I began my ministry in St. Peter's Church and served there for four and a half years. I was thus associated with all three units of the original parish. On June 23 of last year I celebrated in this Church the 50th anniversary of my ordination to the diaconate. I feel, therefore, very happy to be the chosen one to give the congratulation of the Diocese to this noble Church on this great occasion.

It also happens that excepting Bishop White, I have known every rector of this parish. Each had his distinctive virtue. Dr. Henry J. Morton who succeeded Bishop White, and for over fifty-three years served as rector, was a well-known character. He was a scholar and a preacher with strong voice and great dramatic power. He talked with his whole body and sometimes said more in his pauses than in his sentences. On one occasion after a very elaborate and rather noisy Te Deum, he began the Second Lesson, which happened to be Acts xxi. When he came to the 34th verse, he read with great dignity, "And when he could not know the certainty for the tumult", pausing he turned his face full upon the choir. He had many gestures in preaching, some of them rather violent. On one occasion when he had a movable gas pulpit light and was speaking of the unreliability of Science, he said, "throw away these false lights of human reasoning", and suiting the action to the word made a grand sweep which sent the

light off the pulpit. After the sermon an admiring lady said to him "that was marvellously dramatic, how the lamp flew off as you dismissed the false lights." He turned to a gentleman at his side and said, sotto voce, "What fools these mortals be!" He greatly endeared himself not only to his own congregation but to the whole city.

In connection with Dr. Morton, I must mention his friend George W. Childs. He and Anthony J. Drexel were like brothers. As I crossed Chestnut Street Bridge daily, going to the Divinity School, I always saw these two friends coming eastward. Mr. Childs living opposite this Church would daily walk over to meet Mr. Drexel who lived opposite our Divinity School at Thirty-ninth and Walnut Streets. Mr. Childs's benefactions to this Church were marvellous and his affection for Dr. Morton and the support that he gave to his rectorship should be written in the Book of Golden Deeds.

Dr. William Ford Nichols succeeded Dr. Morton and the relations were those of father and son. Unfortunately his reputation reached to the Pacific Coast and in a little over two years he was elected Bishop of California.

Dr. Blanchard, the Rector of St. John's Church, Detroit, was elected Rector in 1890. I had many happy relations with Dr. Blanchard whom I greatly admired and loved.

Resigning in 1900, he was succeeded by Dr. W. C. Richardson. His preaching attracted much attention. There were many peculiarities about it that touched the public fancy. He also specialized in institutional work and St. James's seemed like a beehive of industry. He received the gold medal from the Paris Exposition for the finest Church institutional work. He died in 1914.

In 1915 the present Rector assumed charge. We hope that his rectorship will be long and prosperous.

Associating with him Dr. Joseph Fort Newton, and, with the splendid pastoral work of Dr. Anthony, St. James's Church seems well equipped for the great work that is around it. With services at all hours and equipped with specialists in so many departments, there is every reason to believe that a great and needful work may be done in this community, which now has a population many times as large as in the past. The people may be harder to reach, but our blessed Lord said, "Preach the Gospel to every creature" and thereby indicated that every living soul is susceptible to that Gospel.

As we look back over 125 years the Church stands out with great prominence. On June 3 to 5, 1818 an annual Convention of the Diocese of Ohio was held in Worthington with two priests and Samuel Kilburn, Deacon and the suffrages of ten Parishes,—the day of small things. Philander Chase was elected Bishop. He was consecrated in this Church February 11, 1819. Bishop White presided and the Bishops of New York, New Jersey and Maryland assisted.

The Bishop at once set off for his distant see, returning as he came on horseback and officiated at Zanesville, February 28. Later he built a small log-hut which was the first episcopal palace in Ohio. Other bishops have been consecrated and priests and deacons ordained in St. James's and General Convention held here. It has had an honorable place in the history of the Diocese. Let us hope that the glory of its later days will be greater even than the glory of the years that are past.

The whole Diocese thanks God for what this Church has done in the years gone by, and for its future, prays in the words of St. Paul, that it may be "a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it may be holy and without blemish."